

FACT SHEET

AB 374 (Assembly Member Block):

High School Dropouts

Summary: This bill would require California public schools to obtain written consent from students and their parents or guardians if the student intends to withdraw from high school (drop out). This consent form would inform students and their parent or guardian of the negative consequences of not finishing high school, and inform them of alternative educational opportunities.

Problem: By some measures, the California high school graduation rate is only 71%. This rate is dramatically lower among students of color or economically disadvantaged students. Students who do not finish high school will generally earn less money, are more likely to spend time in jail, and be on public assistance.

In addition, the lost economic productivity caused by students who do not finish high school costs California's economy billions of dollars annually. There are also the increased prison costs and greater public assistance expenditures associated with dropping out of high school. Lowering dropout rates would better opportunities for the student and boost the California economy.

Solution: This bill, in addition with other programs instituted by the Legislature to address low graduation rates, will help reduce dropout rates by ensuring that students and their parents or guardians are aware of the consequences of not finishing high school. Additionally, this bill would ensure that students are aware that they are eligible to be re-enrolled at any time, by informing students of the consequences of leaving before graduation, and inform students of alternative educational services available to them.

Background: The State of Indiana and the City of Chicago have implemented similar requirements. These programs are recent, with little data being collected. However, both Chicago and Indiana have seen general trends toward higher graduation rates that began before, and have continued since, the introduction of these programs.

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